

# Land systems for sustainability

Week 1: April 09, 2025

Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development · Schicklerstraße 5 · 16225 Eberswalde · Germany

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#### **Recap of previous session**

- Definitions of land, land use, and land cover
- Categories of land use
- Meaning and value of land
- Forest bathing YouTube video



#### **Hidden Losses of India's Solar Parks**



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqEM8zSMj\_o



#### Quiz

- 1. What type of paper is the article?
- 2. What are the four higher-level facts and how are they related to the lower-level facts?
- 3. What are the new concepts and terminologies that you learned from the article?



PERSPECTIVE

Show Video Meyfroidt<sup>a,b,1</sup>, Ariane de Bremond<sup>c,d,1,2</sup>, Casey M. Ryan<sup>a,1,2</sup>, Emma Archer<sup>4</sup>, Richard Aspinall<sup>9</sup>, Abha Chhabra<sup>h</sup>, Gilberto Camara<sup>1</sup>, Esteve Corbera<sup>1,k,1</sup>, Ruth DeFries<sup>m</sup>, Sandra Diaz<sup>n</sup>, Jinwei Dong<sup>o</sup>, Erle C. Ellis<sup>o</sup>, Karl-Heinz Erb<sup>o</sup>, Janet A. Fisher<sup>\*</sup>, Rachael D. Garrett<sup>\*</sup>, Nancy E. Golubiewski<sup>\*</sup>, H. Ricardo Grau<sup>\*</sup>, J. Morgan Grove<sup>\*</sup>, Helmut Haberl<sup>4</sup>, Andreas Heiniman<sup>\*</sup>, Robis Kuemmerle<sup>\*,y</sup>, Eric F. Lambin<sup>a,bb,cc</sup>, Sandra Lavorel<sup>4d</sup>, Sharachandra Lele<sup>\*,4f</sup>, Ole Mertz<sup>99</sup>, Peter Messerli<sup>\*,hh</sup>, Graciela Metternicht<sup>80</sup>, Darla K. Munroe<sup>80</sup>, Harini Nagendra<sup>kk</sup>, Jonas Østergaard Nielsen<sup>×,y</sup>, Dennis S. Ojima<sup>11,mm</sup>, Dawn Cassandra Parker<sup>10</sup>, Unai Pascual<sup>4,co,pp</sup>, John R. Porter<sup>44</sup>, Nawa Mamankutty<sup>7</sup>, Anette Reenberg<sup>99</sup>, Rinku Roy Chowdhury<sup>45</sup>, Karen C. Seto<sup>45</sup>, Yorena Seufert<sup>400</sup>, Peter H. Verburg<sup>400</sup>, Gilson Thomson<sup>55</sup>, Billie L. Turner IP<sup>9,zz,aaa</sup>, Jotaro Urabe<sup>bbb</sup>, Tom Veldkamp<sup>500</sup>, Peter H. Verburg<sup>400</sup>, Gete Zeleke<sup>4dd</sup>, and Erasmus K. H. J. zu Ermgasen<sup>1,b</sup>

Edited by Gretchen Daily, Department of Biology, Stanford University, Stanford, CA; received June 7, 2021; accepted November 13, 2021

Land use is central to addressing sustainability issues, including biodiversity conservation, climate change, food security, poverty alleviation, and sustainable energy. In this paper, we synthesize knowledge accumulated in land system science, the integrated study of terrestrial social-ecological systems, into 10 hard truths that have strong, general, empirical support. These facts help to explain the challenges of achieving sustainability in land use and thus also point toward solutions. The 10 facts are as follows: 1) Meanings and values of land are socially constructed and contested; 2) land systems exhibit complex behaviors with abrupt, hard-to-predict changes; 3) irreversible changes and path dependence are common features of land systems; 4) some land uses have a small footprint but very large impacts; 5) drivers and impacts of land-use change are globally interconnected and spill over to distant locations; 6) humanity lives on a used planet where all land provides benefits to societies; 7) land-use change usually entails trade-offs between different benefits---"win-wins" are thus rare: 8) land tenure and land-use claims are often unclear, overlapping, and contested; 9) the benefits and burdens from land are unequally distributed; and 10) land users have multiple, sometimes conflicting, ideas of what social and environmental justice entails. The facts have implications for governance, but do not provide fixed answers. Instead they constitute a set of core principles which can guide scientists, policy makers, and practitioners toward meeting sustainability challenges in land use

land use | sustainability | social-ecological systems | governance

How human societies use, manage, and interact with land is key to addressing current sustainability issues including nature conservation, climate change, food security, poverty alleviation, and energy transitions, framed in high-level political agreements from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to the

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Author contributions: P. Meyfroidt, Ad.B., and C.M.R. designed research; P. Meyfroidt, Ad.B., and C.M.R., performed research; P. Meyfroidt, Ad.B., C.M.R., E.A., RAC, A.C., G.C., E.C., R.D., S.D., J.D., E.C.E., K.H.E., J.A.F., R.D.G., N.E.G., H.R.G., J.M.G., H.H., A.H., P.H., EG.J., S.K., T.K., EFL, S. Lavorel, S. Lele, O.M., P. Messerli, G.M., D.K.M., H.N., J.Ø.N., D.S.O., D.C.P., U.P., J.R.P., N.R., A.R., R.R.C., K.C.S., V.S., H.S., A.T., B.L.T., J.U., T.V., P.H.V., G.Z., and E.K.H.J.Z.E. wrote the paper, and E.A., R.A., A.C., G.C., E.C., R.D., S.D., J.D., E.C.E., K.-H.E., J. Lavorel, J. M.G., H.H., A.H., P.H., EG.J., J.A.F., R.D.G., N.E.G., N.E.G., N.E.G., H.R.G., J.M.G., H.H., A.H., P.H., EG.J., S.L., D.K., D.K.D., K.C.S., J.M.G., H.H., A.H., P.H., EG.J., S.K., T.K., E.F.L., S. Lavorel, S. Lele, O.M., P. Messerli, G.M., D.K.M., H.N., J.A.N., D.S.O., D.C.P., U.P., J.R.P., N.R., A.R., R.R.C., K.C.S., V.S., H.S., A.T., B.L.T., J.U., T.V., P.H.V., G.Z., and E.K.H.J.Z.E. contributed to the content, reviewed, and edited the paper. The authors declare no competing interest. This article is a PMAS Direct Submission.

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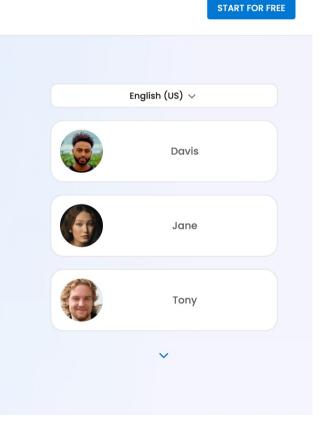


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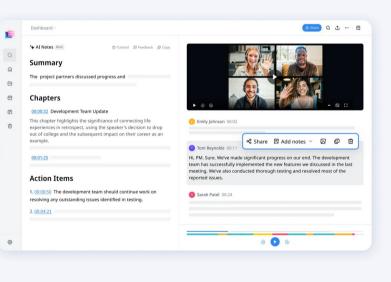


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### **Guiding questions to Meyfroidt et al. 2022**

- 1. What type of paper is the article?
- 2. What are the four higher-level facts and how are they related to the lower-level facts?
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### What type of paper is the article?

- a) Original research
- b) Review article
- c) Case study
- d) Short report or letter
- e) Methodology or methods



#### Ten facts about land systems for sustainability

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- A.d.B. and C.M.R. o
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#### **PNAS**

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PERSPECTIVE

#### Ten facts about land systems for sustainability

 Show
 Video
 Meyfroidt\*\*b\*1
 Ariane de Bremond\*\*d\*\*2
 Casay M. Ryan\*\*1\*2
 Emma Archer\*
 Richard Aspinall\*

 Abha Chhabra\*
 Gilberto Camara', Esteve Corbera\*\*4.
 Ruth DeFries\*\*
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 Detri Steves
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 Johas Østergaard Nielse\*\*\*
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 Unai Pascual\*\*
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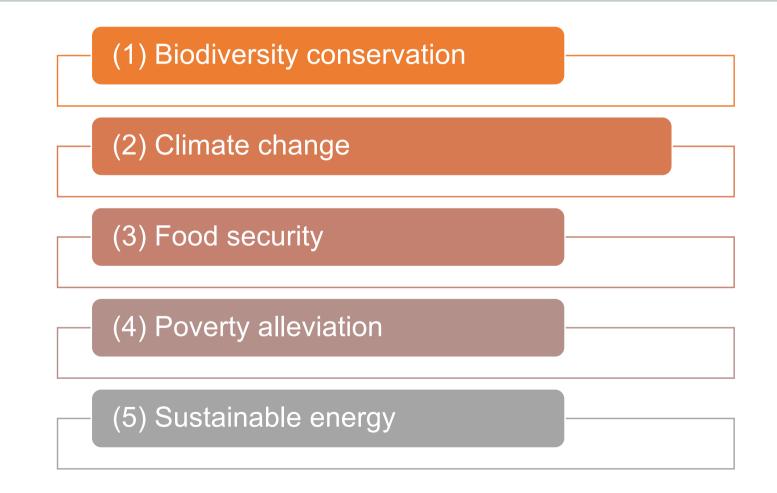
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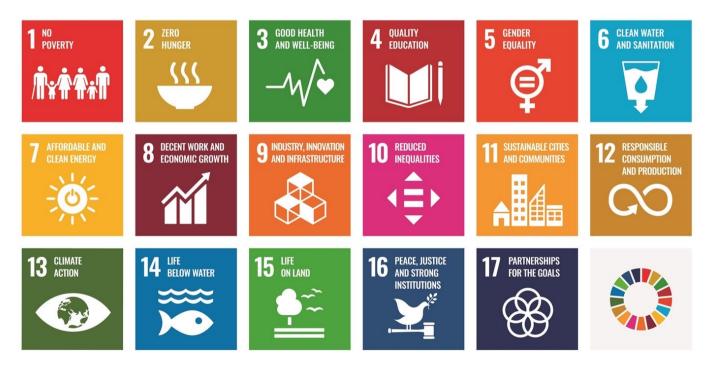
#### Land use is central to addressing sustainability issues





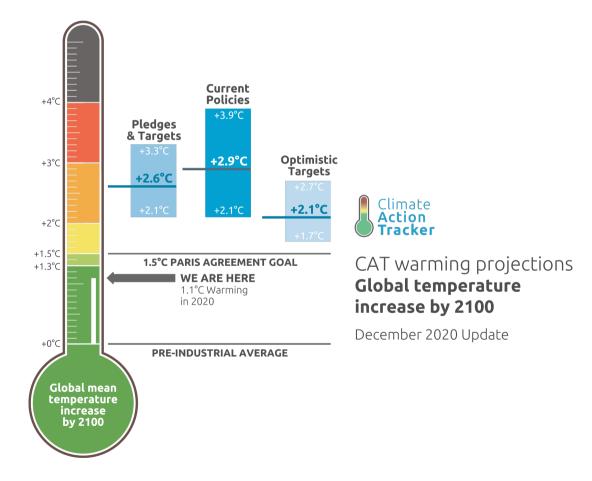
#### Agenda 2030

## SUSTAINABLE GALS





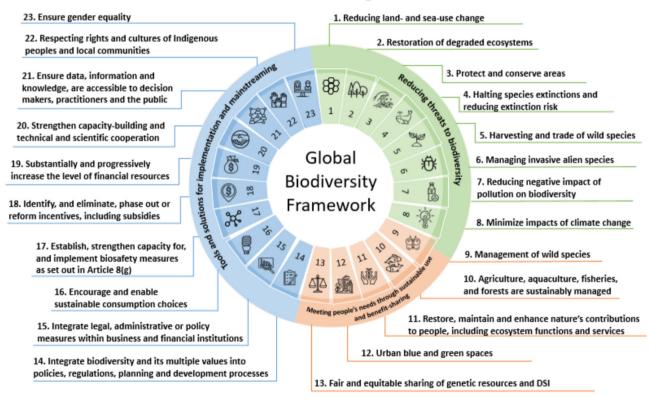
#### **Paris Agreement of the UNFCCC**





#### **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**

#### Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Themes and Targets





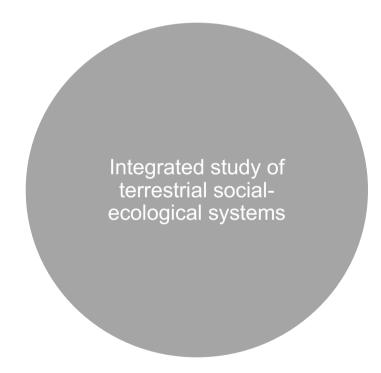
#### Land systems

Terrestrial socialecological systems where human and environmental systems interact through land use

Source: Meyfroidt et al. 2022



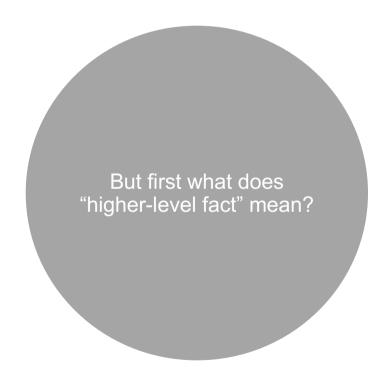
#### Land system science (LSS)



Source: Meyfroidt et al. 2022



#### What are the four higher-level facts?

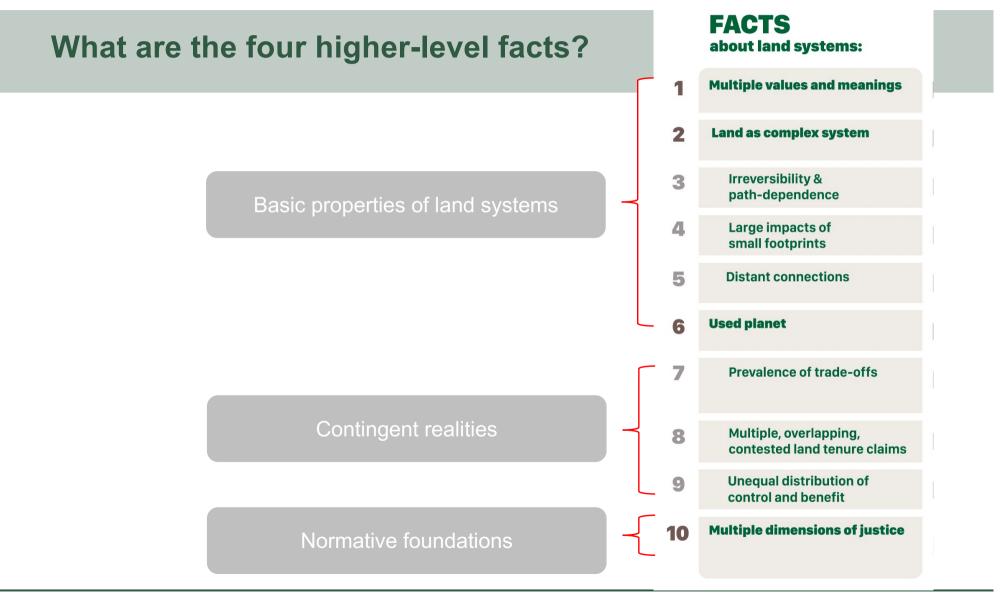




### **Higher-level fact**

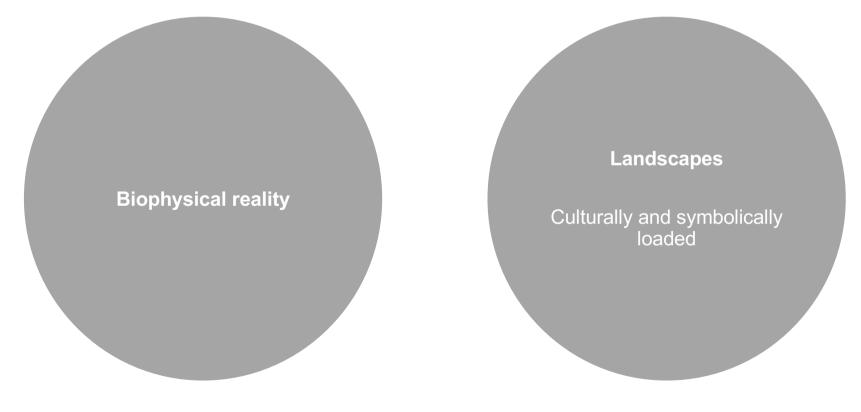
- "Stylized facts" or "empirical regularities" or generalizations supported by a solid body of evidence
- "a conclusion drawn from analysing multiple pieces of evidence or data points. It often involves synthesizing information to understand broader patterns or relationships."







#### (1) Meanings & values are socially constructed & contested

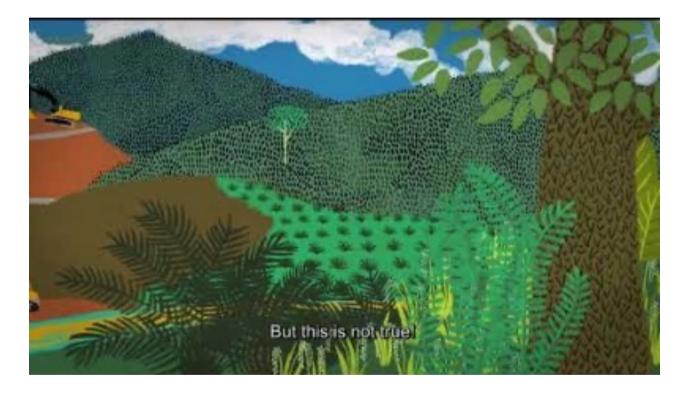


Source: Meyfroidt et al. 2022

	Faith	Links to environmental thought
Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development Biosphere Reserves Institute	Baha'i	Founded by the Persian Baha'u'llah. Believes all religious leaders are manifestations of God and all scripture sacred. Nature and Scripture are the "two books" of revelation. Shoghi Effendi, Baha'u'llah's great-grandson, noted: "Man is organic with the world. His inner life moulds the environment and is itself also deeply affected by it." <sup>17</sup>
	Buddhism	Teaches respect for and interconnectedness of nature; plants and animals are included in schemes of salvation. <sup>18</sup> Gautama Buddha was born, attained enlightenment, and died under trees. Sacred trees are decorated and revered. Buddhism advocates protection, such as ridam in Bhutan, an annual prohibition on entering a designated mountain forest. <sup>19</sup>
	Christianity	Teaches that all creation is a loving act of God and that humanity may not destroy God's creations without the risk of destroying itself. St Francis was an early proponent of ecological stewardship. There have been statements by Christian leaders in response to the ecological crisis. <sup>20</sup> Pope Francis published an encyclical in 2015 calling for protection of nature. <sup>21</sup>
Embedded in knowledge & belief systems	Daoism	Traditionally believed to have been founded by Lao Tzu. Stresses harmonious interaction with the environment, symbolized by a balance between two opposing forces of Yin and Yang. <sup>22</sup> Chuang Tzu, a Daoist scholar, warns against the concept that all nature must be "useful" and stresses its existence value. <sup>23</sup> Modern interpretation lays stress on ecology.
	Hinduism	The earth is revered as Bhumi, "Mother Earth." There are many references to conservation; e.g., the Arthashastra prescribes fines for destroying trees. <sup>24</sup> Damming India's most sacred rivers, the Ganges and Narmada, generated protests partly for faith reasons. <sup>25</sup> During the Chipko movement, women prevented forest loss by surrounding trees with their bodies. <sup>26</sup>
	Jainism	Jains minimize harm to all life-forms and their teachings stress sympathy and compassion with all life. <sup>27</sup> Mahavira stated: "One who neglects or disregards the existence of earth, air, fire, water and vegetation disregards his own existence which is entwined with them." The Institute of Jainology produced the 1990 Jain Declaration on Nature. <sup>28</sup>
	Judaism	In the past, reaction to pantheism downgraded the importance of nature, although this is changing. <sup>29</sup> The Tree of Life is one of Judaism's most powerful images. Planting trees has been a widely observed practice, particularly in recent times and the Torah orders creation of green belts around cities (Numbers 35:4). Trees remain a subject of worship in Israel. <sup>30</sup>
	Islam	The teaching of Allah in the Qur'an states that humans have stewardship over nature, but nature belongs to God. <sup>31</sup> Rivers and lakes need a buffer zone, and tree planting and kindness to animals are encouraged. Islam developed the use of Hima, land protection for grazing, bee-keeping, forests, or water, <sup>32</sup> which is still practiced in Jordan and Saudi Arabia. <sup>33</sup>
	Shinto	Shinto was the traditional faith of Japan before Buddhism. There are many deities with no formal hierarchy or doctrine but strong links to nature. Ceremonies appeal to the kami, forces of nature in mountains, springs, trees, etc. Sacred groves are important, including both cultivated and natural areas.
	Sikhism	Sikhs believe in one God and their sacred writings are contained in the Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Nanak said "Within the Universe, Earth was created to be a shrine." All nature is sacred according to the Sikh faith. Sikhism follows a three hundred year cycle; the current cycle, due to end in 2299, is understood as the "Cycle of Creation" putting an emphasis on environmental practices.
Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development ·	Zoroastrianism	Founded by Zoroaster in modern day Iran. Later, many Zoroastrians moved to India where they are known as Parsis. They regard the earth as sacred, implying that life is also sacred. The decline of vultures in India due to chemical poisoning <sup>34</sup> is a problem for



#### Highly contested notion of degradation



https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\_contin ue=1&v=vQa3ZLO9A\_8&feature=emb\_title



### Shifting / swidden cultivation or slash-and-burn farming?

Need to

- Bridge diverse knowledge and value systems
- Promote bottom-up policy agendas that take multiple value systems in consideration

Source: Meyfroidt et al. 2022